

# McKenzie Preserve

(Alternate: San Joaquin River Gorge)



## Introduction

The Ruth McKenzie Table Mountain Preserve is a former ranch that is now managed by the Sierra Foothill Conservancy. The preserve is on Auberry Road, about 3.3 miles northeast of the intersection of Auberry and Millerton Roads. The Conservancy oversees nearly 3,000 acres of Oak Savannah, with trails that lead to the top of the volcanic-covered Table Mountain.

## Potential Photography subjects

- Sunrise with sunlight hitting Table Mountain to the north and west
- Wildflowers

## Potential Photography Skills to practice

- Close-up focusing
- Small tripod, or a bean bag or some other soft object to set down your camera
- If your camera can automate “focus stacking”, be sure to look up those instructions

## Trip Logistics

Field Trip Date	March 29, 2026
Costs	Parking & Admission = \$10
Carpool Meeting time & location	There is large parking lot beyond the gate with sufficient room for all FCC members
On site Meeting time & Location	Take Auberry Rd north from Copper Avenue; you will pass Millerton Rd twice. The first intersection is at the gas station and store, where most people will turn left to reach the casino. Continuing uphill from this intersection, you will stay on Auberry Rd for another 2.9 miles, where you will see the sign for the McKenzie Preserve to your left. Make the turn into the parking lot just 0.1 past this sign. For the alternate trip to the San Joaquin River Gorge, we will caravan to the town of Auberry.
Gear recommendations	Extension tube, dedicated macro lens, and a telephoto lens (yes, a telephoto can be very useful in “macro” photography).
What to bring	The hope is that there will be plenty of wildflowers close to the parking lot, but sturdy boots for a short hike might still be helpful. Long sleeve shirts and long pants are advisable due to possibility of encountering ticks. We are likely to spend a couple of hours in the morning, from 6:00 AM – 8:00 AM or later, so bring water and snacks accordingly. If the wildflowers are not quite out at this elevation, we may try some impromptu roadside stops elsewhere, perhaps in the San Joaquin River Gorge.

Map

